TACTICAL TIP
San Diego Sheriff's Department
Video Analysis Unit
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Professional Communication

Professional communication in Law Enforcement serves several critical purposes including enhanced officer safety, increased community trust, and a greater likelihood of the successful prosecution of crimes. Conversely, failure to communicate professionally can increase danger to an officer/deputy, encourage public distrust of law enforcement, and interfere with the prosecution of criminal offenses.

P&P Section 2.22 Courtesy -"*Employees shall be courteous to the public and fellow employees. They shall be tactful in the performance of their duties, shall control their tempers, exercise patience and discretion even in the face of extreme provocation. Except when necessary to establish control during a violent or dangerous situation, no member shall use coarse, profane or violent language. Employees shall not use insolent language or gestures in the performance of his or her duties.*"

Utilizing coarse, profane, or violent language may escalate situations compromising officer safety. Additionally, members of the public that witness discourteous conduct from an officer/deputy may be discouraged from assisting law enforcement in future situations or investigations.

The prosecution of crimes may also be compromised due to unprofessional communication. In determining which crimes to file charges, the District Attorney's Office must consider the strength of evidence. Evidence depicting unprofessional conduct by law enforcement reduces credibility in a court of law and may prevent criminal charges from being filed.

Take the following into consideration when interacting with subjects:

- Everything you say is being recorded and could end up being played in a courtroom

- Even when talking to your partners, refer to people in a respectful manner

- Approach communication with the public with the goal of building allies

- Respectful communication often de-escalates dangerous/confrontational situations

- The time you invest into an arrest/case could be negated by unprofessional communication